Community Action
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Exciting news: our new membership program has arrived, fostering connections among community members, partners, and allies to address environmental justice issues in the Inland Valley. In celebration of 45 years of dedicated service, you can now become a member for just $45 annually throughout December. By joining, you’ll gain exclusive access to updates, events, and opportunities to drive positive change. Your small donations play a crucial role in enabling CCAEJ to operate and provide essential resources to the community. As a member, you directly impact your community through your subscription, and today, we invite you to become a Founding Member.

Show your support for our cause with special anniversary pricing throughout December. Your contribution ensures that we can effectively advocate for crucial policy changes, safeguarding communities from environmental hazards. Stand with CCAEJ for a sustainable, healthy future. Visit www.ccaej.org or contact us at (951) 543-1739 / admin@ccaej.org to become a founder today. Let’s make a meaningful impact together!
Celebrating Our Ambassadors
Unveiling a New Era of Environmental Advocacys

By Shane Ysais, Communications Coordinator CCAEJ

In the wake of a captivating Recognition Dinner last Saturday, the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAEJ) is gearing up for a transformative chapter. The culmination of the final 2023 ambassador program cohort reflects the essence of CCAEJ’s commitment to education and fostering connections within our community.

At the core of our mission is the acknowledgment that genuine change springs from the influence and input of our dynamic community. As we set our sights on 2024, we are excited to announce a significant expansion of our programming, introducing community action teams and various initiatives aimed at cultivating positive change.

Our dedication to keeping the community informed remains steadfast. Essential information continues to be disseminated through diverse channels, including email newsletters, magazines, and engaging community meetings. To deeply engage with the community pulse, consider subscribing to our email newsletter and becoming a member, granting exclusive access to the latest magazine each quarter.

Participate in shaping the future by joining a community action team for your city. This involvement catalyzes organic grassroots mobilizations that, like ripples, evolve into powerful movements of change. In 2024, become an integral part of initiatives that redefine our community’s narrative.
As we step into 2024, gratitude flows for the steadfast support in 2023. The journey ahead promises collaboration, excitement, and substantial progress. To stay connected, visit our website to subscribe to our newsletter and receive constant updates. Follow us on social media for real-time insights into community developments.

Together, let’s paint the canvas of 2024 with the vibrant hues of community solidarity and progress. Your involvement is pivotal in shaping a future that resonates with the collective aspirations of our community.
By Shane Ysais, Communications Coordinator  CCAEJ

Over the past year, the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAEJ) has diligently spearheaded the authorship of Assembly Bill 1000 (AB 1000). This legislative initiative is designed to establish increased separation between warehousing activities and sensitive receptors, both within the inland region and throughout California. CCAEJ has actively engaged in multiple trips to Sacramento, advocating for the passage of this bill despite encountering various obstacles, including the presence of alternative bills that undermine the foundational principles of these crucial initiatives. Despite these challenges, CCAEJ maintains confidence in its ability to navigate these hurdles and propel AB 1000 towards effecting positive change within our community.

Recently, the Majority Leader of Ameritas, Eloise Gomez Reyes, hosted an Environmental Justice (EJ) round table, specifically focusing on the intricacies of AB 1000. This session served as a platform to address concerns among diverse stakeholders, fostering collaborative efforts to enhance the cleanliness and health of our region. Such events exemplify the commitment of CCAEJ to creating a more equitable living environment for underserved and underrepresented communities that often find themselves overlooked in the legislative process.
In a recent update from Sacramento, Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas has withdrawn both AB 1000 and AB 1748, opting for a collaborative approach to create a new bill through compromise. This move is seen as a positive stride towards environmental justice, addressing the pressing issue of warehouses encroaching on sensitive areas. Despite this progress, vigilance is crucial, considering the potential resistance from influential industries. The community must stand united, actively participating in the working group to voice concerns about the crisis posed by warehouses near homes, schools, and other vulnerable receptors in the inland region. In alignment with our mission to nurture hope, CCAEJ aspires to inspire local leaders, emphasizing the paramount importance of the work being undertaken.
By Shane Ysais, Communications Coordinator  CCAEJ

In a resounding win for community and environmental advocates, Judge Chad Firetag of the Riverside Superior Court delivered a groundbreaking decision on Monday, October 16, overturning approvals for the controversial Compass Danbe Centerpointe warehouse project. The proposed industrial development, spanning over 390,000 square feet, had sparked heated debates due to its proximity to homes and schools in Moreno Valley.

The judge’s ruling marked a pivotal moment for groups such as the Sierra Club and the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAEJ), which had vehemently argued that the project ran afoul of state environmental laws. The celebratory rally outside Moreno Valley City Hall today symbolized a triumph for those advocating against potential air quality degradation, noise pollution, and increased truck traffic stemming from the warehouse complex.

Judge Firetag’s decision centered on the City’s failure to thoroughly assess the project’s impacts on air quality, noise levels, and truck movements before granting it approval last year. The proposed industrial warehouses, slated for construction on land zoned for commercial use opposite residential areas, now face a halt pending further scrutiny under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Marla Matime, the board president of CCAEJ, expressed elation, declaring, “This is a huge win for the Inland Empire. Our lungs are not for sale, and families deserve to live and thrive in their communities.
without constant pollutants that threaten our livelihoods.” Matime commended Judge Fire-
tag’s ruling, expressing hope that it would set a standard for future projects, ensuring that environmental considerations take precedence.

The Sierra Club, along with CCAEJ and other concerned parties, initiated legal action, contending that the project’s environmental review was flawed. Their experts raised alarms about potential diesel emissions and associated health risks to nearby schools and residences. Judge Firetag concurred, deeming the expert analysis and public commentary as “substantial evidence” of overlooked environmental impacts that the City had improperly dismissed.

Stan King, Chair of the Sierra Club Moreno Valley Group, emphasized the relief felt by Moreno Valley residents, stating, “The residents of Moreno Valley can now breathe a bit easier. Warehouse trucks and operations can have profound negative impacts on the community and the environment. There is absolutely no reason they should be near homes and schools.”

Under the court ruling, the City must now set aside its previous approvals and undertake a comprehensive review in compliance with CEQA before reconsidering the warehouse project. The Sierra Club, CCAEJ, and other participating groups have pledged to maintain pressure on Moreno Valley, advocating for development that prioritizes the health and well-being of vulnerable residents.

This landmark decision sends a powerful message, reinforcing the importance of robust environmental assessments and community engagement in shaping the future of development projects. As Moreno Valley navigates the path forward, the case sets a precedent for communities nationwide, highlighting the imperative to prioritize sustainable and health-conscious urban planning.
During the Fall I had the wonderful privilege and opportunity to collaborate and partner up with my own community college (San Bernardino Valley College). What we did was provide a free program to everyone with one important goal: Help people better understand how to use computers and phones. When the decision was made to move this program forward I jumped at the chance to take ownership. The reason being is that I understood very well why this was going to be so important for people. My parents like others also have difficulties with understanding and utilizing technology in today’s modern digital landscape. In my earlier years it was on me being the oldest in the family to assist my parents (and siblings occasionally) with any issues with the family computer or their individual phones. Whether it was “Son, how do you share this document?” or “Steven, can you help me with this website on our car payments?” A lot of instances have happened where I was the sole assistance that they had access to better understand what they were using.

Now things are different. After having the most wonderful and dedicated people join my class, eager to not let the digital world escape them, I can say that without a doubt our community wants to learn and not let the minor problems of understanding computers and phones keep them away from that. It was through an understanding of patience and how to really implement easy methods that allow us to really learn anything. So remember that community is always accepted and I learned just as much if not more from my community and their resilience than anything else. Be sure to stay tuned for next year to know when our next classes begin.
Fontana’s Ongoing Struggle
City Council’s Shameful Attack on Street Vendors and Democracy

By Shane Ysais, Communications Coordinator  CCAEJ

Fontana, once considered vibrant, now faces a disturbing conflict as local politicians, seemingly corrupted, wage war against the community’s well-being and unity. At the center of this brewing storm is a controversial ordinance that has ignited a fierce citywide debate.

In a baffling move, Fontana’s city council has not only criminalized street vendors but has shamelessly outsourced the forceful impoundment of vendors’ property to a third-party entity. This audacious decision blatantly contradicts the state’s explicit endorsement of street vending as a legal activity in California.

Securing permits for street vending in Fontana has been made nearly impossible, despite the state’s clear support. The council, displaying an alarming lack of concern for community feedback, slyly changed the meeting time from 7 to 2 PM, erecting a significant barrier to public participation—especially for those whose livelihoods are directly impacted by the unjust ordinance.

The community, overwhelmingly in support of street vendors, now faces additional obstacles with ordinances infringing on free speech and picketing near public officials’ residences—a right constitutionally protected. Fontana’s City Council seems to be not only challenging the law but also trampling on constitutional protections.

CCAEJ, a beacon of support for free speech and street vendors, stands in defiance against the council’s oppressive measures. These vendors are not criminals but hardworking individuals striving to provide for their families and contribute to their communities. Every move by the council towards censorship is met with fierce opposition from CCAEJ, committed to standing up for the marginalized community in Fontana.

As the battle for justice, fairness, and individual rights unfolds, Fontana stands not as a beacon of defiance but as a cautionary tale of a community under siege by a corrupt city council.
By Shane Ysais, Communications Coordinator  CCAEJ

From December 6 to 8, the Inland Empire had the pleasure of hosting distinguished guests from the California Transportation Commission and Interagency Equity Advisory Committee. Amidst the usual business of funding approvals and project reviews, this meeting provided a unique opportunity for community members in the Inland Valley region. It allowed them to engage with the CTC, express their concerns, and hear firsthand responses from members who may not have otherwise experienced the realities faced by those on the frontlines in our region.

The Inland Valley region serves as a vital hub for the logistics industry, boasting over 1.4 billion square feet of existing warehouse space, with an additional 366 million square feet in the approval pipeline. With such a substantial presence of warehouses, our roads witness a significant surge in truck trips. However, the critical question arises: does our region’s infrastructure adequately support this increased capacity?

During the CTC meetings, public comments and a presentation by CCAEJ staff at the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee meeting prompted commission and committee members to pause and reflect on the unique needs of the Inland Empire. Public comments highlighted the lack of public transportation and the growing insecurities on roads and freeways faced by community due to increased truck
traffic and road degradation. California’s Secretary of Transportation, Toks Omishakin, acknowledged a crucial point during the interagency meeting. He highlighted that recent funds allocated to port cities focused on where goods are shipped from, but not necessarily on where they are received—such as the Inland Empire.

As we actively organize and strengthen our community in the Inland Empire, it becomes imperative to hold agencies like the CTC accountable. Our region can no longer be overshadowed; instead, it must be prioritized as a major artery for the movement of goods. Our frontline communities rightfully deserve access to clean air, reliable public transportation, and infrastructure tailored to their needs, rather than solely serving the interests of industry. Together, let’s continue to advocate for a more equitable and community-friendly approach to transportation and infrastructure planning.
Get ready for a truly powerful event as CCAEJ proudly unveils the second annual Rising Voices Community Engagement Conference, exploding onto the scene April 4th and 5th 2024! Brace yourselves for ‘Seeds of Change,’ a theme that echoes our 45-year legacy as fearless warriors in the environmental justice space.

45 years ago, our trailblazing founder, Penny Newman, took on industry giants, fought her way to the Supreme Court, and birthed the powerhouse that is CCAEJ. Now, we’re gearing up for a conference that will redefine the environmental justice landscape.

For over four decades, CCAEJ has been in the trenches, fighting for our planet and underserved communities of color. This conference is our declaration to be a driving force in environmental justice across the inland region. Brace yourself for a rollercoaster of topics – civic education, environmental justice, economic justice, housing justice, labor, infrastructure, voter education, policy education, health, and community resilience.
But that’s not all – envision captivating panels, mind-blowing workshops, electrifying presentations, and an art extravaganza, all building up to the grand finale: the Rising Voices Gala at Cal State San Bernardino. We’re calling on all you movers and shakers from San Bernardino and Riverside County to join us for what is guaranteed to be the one of the most electrifying conferences of the year.

For those eager to be part of this impactful initiative, detailed information is available at www.CCAEJ/risingvoices. Explore sponsorship opportunities to contribute to providing essential resources for our communities. Join us in cherishing the memorable moments from past conferences and anticipating the powerful experiences and connections that will unfold at Rising Voices 2024!
The Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAEJ) is a progressive equity-based organization that embodies hope, unites people y pueblos, to create intersectional solutions that transform communities “to bring people together to improve their social and natural environment.” Utilizing the lens of environmental health, we achieve regenerative change by developing resilient BIPOC intergenerational leadership, through the power of community base-building. Through strategic campaigns, we cultivate inclusive self-sustaining neighborhoods, where everyone can live, work, play, and thrive.